

Μαλακίας τῷ Γε,

THE
BREVITY and VANITY
OF
Man's Life;

DISCOVERED IN
A SERMON,
PREACHED

At the FUNERALS of
Mrs. ELLEN HARTCOURT,
Youngest Daughter to the Virtuous, and Ex-
cellent Lady CONY of Stoke in Lincolnshire,
Who was interr'd in Saint Andrews-Holborn-
Church, March 23. 1661. being married
that Day five Weeks before:

By RICHARD HENCHMAN.

— *Man being in bonour abides not* —

Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede Pauperum Tabernat, Regūque Turres. Mor. O. 3. 4. lib. 1.

Nulla Palastria. Homo, venias, sis pulveris, umbra:

Incipit, & cessat; nascitur, & moritur.

Ημεῖς, & οἱ μὲν ἄνθρωποι.

LONDON,

Printed by Tho. Roycroft, for William Gresham at the Black Bear near the
little North-door in St. Paul's Church-yard. MDCLXI.

THE
BREVITY AND VARIETY
OF

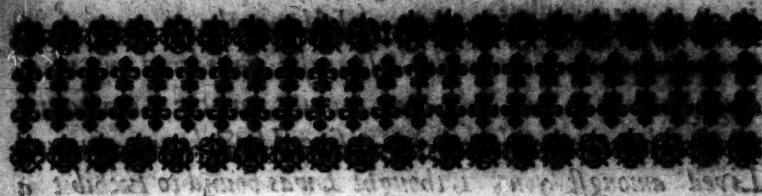
MAN'S LIFE
AND THE
SHORTNESS OF
HIS TIME
ON THE
MORALITY OF
HIS ACTIONS



As the
LIFE OF
YOUNG
MEN
AND
WOMEN
WHO
WAS
LIVED
IN
THE
CITY
OF
OXFORD
IN
THE
YEAR
1600

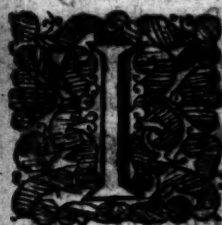
By Richard
H. CHAMBERLAIN

Printed by
J. H. [illegible]
at the [illegible]
in the [illegible]



To the Virtuous, and my Ever-Honoured
 Lady, the Lady SARAH, Wife of Sir
 SUTTON CONY of STOKES in Lin-
 colnshire, the Sorrowful Mother of this
 Deceased Lady.

MADAM,



I was not my intention, when I Preached
 this Ensuing Sermon, that it should spread
 further then the Pulpit; I thought indeed,
 being Your grief hindered You from the
 hearing of it, You might perchance request
 a Copy of it for Your Closet, but never
 dreamed You would have been so Importunate with me for the
 Press. But if it may be any Allay of Your Sorrow for
 Your great Loss, or of any use to the Publick, I shall not Re-
 pent of gratifying your desires, though of it self, the expressi-
 ons being so home-spun, and the Notions so common, I cannot

Wick

The Epistle

the Judge who was then delivered Manuſcript to come forth
 upon Light; And when I ſeriously conſidered my many
 Obligations to Your Self, and Family, and the Comforts
 which I have receiv'd from you ſince I firſt knew you, and
 Lived amongſt you; I thought I was bound to Exhibit a
 Teſtimonial of that Service, and Reſpect, which I
 owed unto You, and therefore had rather Hazard my own
 Reputation, if I may Advance the Edification of others,
 and adventure once more the Cenſures of the World, rather
 then have my own heart Cenſure me for Unthankfulneſs.

I do therefore moſt humbly offer it into Your Ladyſhip's
 Hands; and if You think it Unworthy of that Honour,
 caſt it at Your Feet; only let me Entreat You for Her ſake,
 who was the Occaſion of it, to caſt a favourable Eye upon it
 now, and then, and Graciously receive it into Your Pre-
 ſence, and it will Reckon it ſelf highly graced, and Digni-
 fied, and not Ambitiouſly deſire any other Patronage.

M A D A M, I know you are Senſible enough of the Af-
 flictions of Your Family, more Particularly, of this great
 Loſs, You have lately ſuſtained, the God of Patience, and
 Conſolation grant You to Study a quiet Submiſſion un-
 to, and an Holy Improvement of this his Afflicting hand.
 If You do but Commune ſeriously with Your own
 Heart, You will ſee Cauſe enough for this Holy ſilence, and
 ſubmiſſion. How precious was this Jewel was in
 Your Eye (and indeed ſhe was very Precious) yet you ſee, it
 was of a Brittle Nature. All the Sons, and Daughters of
 Adam,

Adam, or Mortal Creatures; and why should You be troubled to see a Mortal Creature Dy.

To make complain, that our Relations are dead, is to complain, That they were Mortal: good MADAM, I beseech You, look upon the hand of God that hath done what is done, and this (if any thing) will quiet your Spirit, because the stroke was given by God him self: Remember, that a Dear Child is far better in the bosom of Christ, then in the Bosom of the greatest Earthly Monarch. Though You want her company, yet she wants not yours, you shall go to her, (if you dy, as she did) but she can never come back to you: Though she was an Obedient Child to you, and did Honour her Parents whilst she lived; yet God did not break his Promise with her, because he did not grant her a long life here, as long as he translated her to life eternal: therefore I would be to you Sensible as you are indeed of God's Afflicting Providences; but I hope, you will not Murmure under them, for (as our saviour saith) He, that sees not God's hand in his severest Dispensations, disowns his Sovereignty, laughes on the, that Repines, denies his Righteousness.

MADAM, I beseech you Excuse my Boldness, that I use this freedom with you: give me leave in three words to Counsel you, as well as Comfort you; and I shall trouble you no further.

First, I beg, that you would Meditate much on your own End; you have lived a great many Years already, and 'tis

The Epistle Dedicatory.

not Probable you can live so many more. Certainly Death comes near the Mother, when it lays hold upon the Child; when your Dear Daughter departed this life, She left you this Memento, that you must shortly follow.

Secondly, Consider how uncertain all worldly things are: Children, the best of worldly Comforts, yet they are but dying Comforts: the loss of worldly Contentments (We think) should make us love the world the less: God grant it may work this Effect in you.

Lastly, Study more and more to make out Your Spiritual Relation to Christ; this Relation can never be Dissolved, though your Children, your Husband, your Friends, may be taken from you, yet this Union, this Relation cannot be Obliterated.

Now the good Lord of Heaven, and Earth, grant you an Assurance of this Relation, before you go hence, and be seen no more. And thus (dear M^RADAM) begging your Pardon, I commend your self, and all your excellent Relations, to the Protection, and Blessing of Almighty God: beseeching him (if it be his blessed will) for a Continuing of the Remaining Comforts to you here, and a full Consummation of perfect Joy, and Happiness, with them hereafter: Which shall be the constant Prayers of,

M^RADAM,

May 3^d

1661

Your Ladyships most obliged,
and perfectly Devoted Servant;

RICHARD HENCHMAN

PSALME XXXIX

*Behold, thou hast made my Days as a hand-breadth,
and mine Age is as nothing before thee; verily every
man, at his best Estate, is altogether Vanity.*

THE Text (you see) is suitable to the
Occasion; It contains a sad Story of
man's Frailty, Mortality, and Vanity:
A Meditation never untimely, but
most seasonable upon such occasions
as these are.

The Text divides it into these two general Parts.
First, The Brevity of man's Life, in those words:
Behold, thou hast made my days, as an hand-breadth. Se-
condly, The Vanity of man's Life, in the last words:
Verily, every man at his best Estate, is, &c.

In the First there are these two things considerable
of us; 1. An Excitation of Attention in that word,
Behold: 2. An excellent Description of man's sudden
Dissolution: *Thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth.*

Again

Again in the Description there are two things also more worthy of our Notice;

1. Who it is, that limits mans Life, it is God, Thou, O Lord, hast made, &c.

2. The Line, wherewith our Lives are measured: and that also is twofold.

1. By it self, if we consider it in its own Frailty; so the just Measure of our Lives, 'tis an hand-breadth.

2. If we consider it by the Line of Eternity; so it is found to be as just nothing; *Mine Age is as nothing before thee*: that's the first general Part, The Brevity of mans Life.

In the second also, which contains the Vanity of man's Life; There are two more considerable things of us.

1. A Serious & Solemn Affeeration, to free us from Doubts of this Truth, in that word *Vanity*: 2. A Positive, and Peremptory Conclusion, and Proposition, in the last words, *That man, is at his best State altogether Vanity*; In which, there are also two other things observable here:

1. The Universality; Every man, or woman, without Exception, none exempted.

2. The Amplification from their Quality; Be he in Condition never so Excellent, in Place never so Eminent, in Fortune never so permanent. Yet there is no Exemption, no Limitation: For Every man in his

his very best Estate is altogether Vanity.

Thus I have, as briefly as I could, given you an Account of the Parts of the Words: Give me leave to give you but a brief Explication of them; and I'll come to the Doctrinal Observations, which Genuinely flow from them: And,

First, *Thou hast made my Days*; i. e. *Tempus meum*, or *Vitam meam*, my Life, or Age, or Time in the World, So most Expositours render it.

Secondly, *As on hand-breadth instar Pugilli*, as a Span-length; this is put by way of Similitude, and Resemblance. A short time, no Doubt, that is inched out, or finger'd by the Span: other things have larger Dimensions, they are lin'd out by the Fathom, or the Cubit, or the Foot at least: Nothing, that I can read of, is measured by this frail Measure, but the Life of man; a thing so *Fragil*, and *Momentary*, that there was nothing could so well express it as a Span. A word so tost, and tumbled by Expositors, that they are somewhat driven to a Plunge to give the right Signification of it; Some translate it, *ad Mensuram Pugillorum*, a little Handful, so *Musculus*; Others, *ad Mensuram quatuor Digitorum*, the Breadth of four Fingers: *Juni-us* and *Mollerus* render it thus, *Palmares posuisti dies*, Thou hast made my Days as a hand-breadth. The Word of the Septuagint is *παλάτης* which the Yulgar Latin reads *Mensurabiles*, something that is measure-

able, and therefore but short. Though the Age of man in Scripture is sometimes measur'd by Days, and Moneths, and Years yet these days are *breves*, quickly gone; these Moneths are Moneths of Vanity Job vii. 3. these years are *Anni paucissimi*, few years, and short, Job viii. 9. *We are but of yesterday, and know nothing; our da s upon Earth, are a shadow*; and Jacob (though he liv'd an hundred and thirty years) yet he tells Pharoah, *That few and evil had the days of the years of his Life been*; Gen. lxvii. 9. A Span-long streightned to a Prescript time, a strict measure this Span-long, which man can neither diminish, or dilate in his own Power, but he is pent up here by this narrow frail Inclosure, his Life's span'd out, his Pillar's pitcht, his *Non ultra* limited, his Circuit's bounded, he cannot exceed a Tittle, not the smallest Hair of his appointed time; as God says to the Sea, *Hitherto you shall come, and no further*; so he sets Bars to mans Life, and says to every man, *So long you shall live and no longer*; and if we live as long as ever any man lived, yet tis but a Span-long, a few days (indeed) that are span'd out; that's a Second.

Again Thirdly, When these days are gone: Lord what are we? Surely, even as nothing before thee: All this whole Pilgrimage on Earth is but as nothing, most Expositours read it, *Ut nihil* or *tanquam nihil*. *Mistulus* renders it, *Est ac si non esset*, man's age is, as if it were not; a yesterday, that is past; *A thousand Years*

in thy Sight, are but as yesterday when it is past, Psal. xc. 4. Had Moses there resembled it to a Day, such a day, as we enjoy; or to an Hour of this day, or to one Minute of this hour, we might have thought there had been some Stability in man's Life, but he resembles it to a day, spent, consumed, and expired; to a yesterday, that's a nothing, 'tis past and gone. Oh! how this intimates to us our Frailty, and Transitoriness; Alas! our Age is as nothing in respect of God's Infiniteness; for if a thousand years, Lord, to thee be but as yesterday, that is past; then frail man, that is but a Resemblance of that yesterday, must be nothing to thy thousand, thy thousand thousands, thy Myriads of thousands thy Eternity, thy Everlastingness. *Mine age is nothing before thee; that's a Third.*

Fourthly, Why is it nothing? the last words will tell us, *Because man in his best Estate is altogether Vanity.* See, not man in his Autumn, or Declination, but in his best Estate, in his most flourishing Condition, in the Spring of his Prosperity, is *Vanity*; and not onely *Vanity*, but *omnimoda Vanitas*, altogether *Vanity*, not man in particular, but all mankind, is not onely vain, but *Vanity*, I, and altogether *Vanity*: *Verily every man in his best Estate, &c. vers. 6. Surely every man walketh in a vain Shew, and disquieteth himself in vain. I beheld him, says David, and he was gone; I sought him, and he was nowhere to be found; Psal. xxxvii. 36. We go hence, as the Shadow,*

that departs, we are tossed to and fro, and driven away as the Grasshoppers, or Locusts. Psal. cix. 23. This Life is but a tossing, and a driving away; We make a great deal ado, and a stir, but to little purpose; Death comes, and he shakes us off, he crops our Flowers, he withers and drives us away; and then what are we? a little Dust. And what's Dust? a little light Stuff, a vain thing, every puff of Wind blows it away; so that we may well say with our Prophet here, *Thou, O Lord, hast made our days, &c.*

And thus I have run through the words by a brief Paraphrase, or Exposition. Come we to collect some Doctrinal Observations from them; and they onely shall be these two; Which comprehend the Marrow, and Quintessence of the whole Verse: As,

First, *Mans Life is short: his Pilgrimage on Earth is of very short Continuance; his glass is soon run out, his Date expired, his Term of Life quickly ended.* That's the First.

Secondly, *Man, frail man, in all his worldly Pomp, and glory, is a meer Vanity.*

I'll begin, first, with the First. Take some Proof, Job xiv. 1, 2. *Man that is born of a Woman, is of few days, &c.* See the Original, or Birth of man, speaks the Frailty of man; can we expect any thing from frail, but frail? from her, who is of few days, and full of trouble, any thing but him, who is such himself? Man being

being born of a woman, the weaker Vessel, is a Vessel of *Weakness*; which, like the purest *Chrystal*, breaks in pieces with the least *Knock*, or *Fall*: Man breeds the *Worm* in his own *Root*, which smites the flourishing *Gourd* of his *Life*: Nay, when the total *Sum* of his *Pilgrimage* is exactly cast up, it amounts but to *threescore Years and ten*; and if, by reason of *Strength*, they be *four score years*, yet is their *Strength Labour and Sorrow*, for it is soon cut off; and we flee away. *Psal. xc. 10.*

Again, *Job vii. 6.* Man's Life is assimilated to a *Weaver's Shuttle*: *My days are swifter then a Weaver's Shuttle.* The *Septuagint* renders it thus: *My days are nimbler then a Word, or Speech*; now, nothing moves faster, or passes away more lightly then a *Word*, a word is gone suddenly, hence the *Similitude* is used *Proverbially*. *We spend our days as a Tale that is told.* *Psal. xc. 9.* Swifter then a *Weaver's Shuttle*, which is an instrument of a very sudden Motion, which spends the *Yarn* with speed, and what remains from the *Web* is cut off.

Again, at the 7. *vers.* Man's life is resembled to the *Wind*; that blusters for a day, and at night passes away, none knows whither: the *Life* of man is like *Wind* in two things: as,

1. The *Wind* passes away speedily, so does man's *Life*.
2. The *Wind* when it is past returns no more: as you cannot stop the *Wind*, or change its *Course*; so

all the Powers in the World cannot recal a man's life, when it is gone. *Psal. lxxviii. 39. He remembers, that they were but flesh; a Wind, that passes away.*

Again man's Life is resembled to a *Bubble*, *Hos. x. 7. now a Bubble (ye know) rises, and falls again, in one and the self-same Moment; To a Vapour, Jam. iv. 14. which is dispersed as soon as raised, as soon as it appears, it disappears, 'tis (as one calls it) a little Spot of time between two Eternities, Saint Augustine doubts whether to call it a dying Life, or a living Death.*

Again, the Brevity of a man's Life is set forth in Scripture by the *Flower of the Field*, *Is. xl. 6, 7. by the Grass, by a Shadow, by a Dream; 'tis compar'd to Pilgrims, and Travellers, who take up their Inn for a short Time, not to abide there for ever; Heb. xi. 13. and Psal. xxxix. I am a Stranger, and a Pilgrim, (sayes David) as all my Fathers were. We have no abiding City, Job ix. 25. My days are swifter then a Post, whose pace is all upon the Speed, and Spur: so our days flee away, as the swift Ships, as the Eagle, that hasts to the Prey: Pliny mentions a certain Plant called *Ephemerum*, a Plant of one day's duration: such a Plant is man, planted by the Rivers side to bring forth his fruit in the due season of that Day; And he tells us also of a certain Worm, about the River of *Hisspany* in *Pontus*, which lives but one day, and is gone, termed *Hemerobion*, such a Worm is man; A Worm, and no man (as David said *Psal. xxii. 6.*)*

xxii, 6) born in the Morning, dead at Night; alive, and in perfect Health one Day, and dead the next.

Now man is a *Worm* in a fivefold Respect.

1. Look upon his Original, and Constitution, he is from the Earth, as the *Worm* is.

2. Look upon him in his Natural Estate and Condition, he lives upon the Earth, and earthly things, as *Worms* do.

3. He's a *Worm*; because continually subject to danger, every Foot may crush him.

4. He's a *Worm*; because, as the *Worm* is subject to danger, so likewise unable to resist, or make Defence, the *Worm* is a naked Creature, and wears no Arms, neither offensive, nor defensive; such an one is man, unable to defend himself, unless the Lord be a Shield, and a Defence to him round about.

Lastly, man is a *Worm*, because, he must shortly return to the Earth, where the *Worms* are housed; He is going to *Worms*, as a *Worm*: As the Lord said, *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return*, so we may say, A *Worm* thou art, and to *Worms* thou shalt return: Thus you see man is a very poor contemptible thing, *A Worm*.

Why then should we envy any man? What, envy a *Worm*? What if another have a little more Glory, Riches, Beauty, Strength, Power, then thou hast? what though he have a little more Knowledge, and better

better gifted, then others, yet he is but a *Worm* still: and why should a *Worm* envy a *Worm*? what though some are *Silk worms*, a little better furnished, and richer then others in *Mind*, and *Body*; yet they are but *Worms* in *Silk*, and many who appear, so now a days, are but *Glow-worms*, which shine a little, but have no *Consistence*.

Again; Seeing we are but *Worms*, let's take heed of vexing one another, why should *Worms* rise up against *Worms*? Why should *Worms* destroy *Worms* cruelly, and bloodily? We are *weak as Worms*. Let us therefore rather engage that little *Strength* we have, for *supporting*, not *ruining* one another.

But this you will say is a *Digression*: To proceed therefore; Man's *Life* is nothing else but a little *warm Breath*, Tun'd in and out by the *Nostrils*, a narrow passage, and soon stoppt. Methinks by all these *Scripture Similitudes*, which I have cited, we may be put in mind of our *Frailty*, and they may serve to check those *proud Desires*, which are in man of an *Eternal abode*, and lasting *Happiness* of this *Life*.

You may see a *Monument* of man's *Frailty* set forth in all the *Elements*. Go to the *Land*, and there is a *Post*, see, *Time's* there upon the *Spur*: Go to the *Sea*, and there is a *swift Ship*: Go to the *Air*, and *Time's* upon the *Wing*, in the *swift flying Eagle*; Go to the *Water*, man's *Life's* a *Bubble*, a *Vapour*. Twere to trifle away precious time to show *Resemblances* in other things:

I only produced these, to shew you the swift passage of man's Life. And therefore not to stay long upon that, which moves so *swiftly*; Give me but leave to shew you in what Respects *Man's days* are said to be so short as an *hand-breadth*, which may serve as the *Grounds*, and *Reasons* of the *Point*, and so I'll apply it, that I may proceed to the next.

As, 1. The Days of man are of short Continuance, if we consider them in themselves; That's not long, which is no longer then an *hands-breadth*: take it which way you will, in the largest extent, for a *Span*, or the whole space between the top of the Thumb, and the little Finger stretched out; or in the lesser extent, for the Breadth only of the four Fingers; and indeed this is but a short space: that's the First.

2. The Days of man are of short Continuance, if we consider them Comparatively: and that two ways.

1. As man may be compared with man. 2. As man is compared with God.

1. We collect the fewness of man's days by comparing him with man, under a twofold Consideration; 1. Of what Number the Days of man once were.

2. Of what Number they shall be.

1. The Days of man are few, compared with what his days were before the Flood: then many men liv'd six, seven, eight, nine hundred, and some almost a thousand Years; Now, if any man attain fourscore, or an

hundred Years, he is wondrous old: and if any reach to an hundred and fourty, or fifty (as lately old *Parr* did) he is such a Rarity, that he draws more eyes to behold his wrinckled wither'd face, then any can with their most youthfull Beauty.

But then again, 2. As man's days are few, compared with what he liv'd before the Flood; so they are fewer, compared with the days, which, he might have liv'd if he had not saln. The State of *Innocency* had in it a kind of *Immortality*: Sin was the Shortner of man's days, 'tis the Birth of Sin in man, which is the Seed of Death.

Again, 3. If the Days of man are of short Continuance, compared with what they once were, or might have been upon the Earth. How short, and few are they in comparison of what they shall be, when he shall be raised out of the Earth? Then the Days of man's Life, within *Heaven*, or *Hell*, in *Happiness*, or in *Misery*, shall be as long as the Day of *Eternity*.

4. And lastly; As the Days of man are of short Continuance, compared with what he once had, or shall have; so they are fewest of all compared with the days of God; so few, that as his days cannot be counted, because they are so many; so ours can hardly be counted, because they are so few: they are as nothing before him. What is all Time compared with *Eternity*? Oh! then, what a *Nothing* is the Age of man to *Eternity*? Behold, *Thou hast made my days as*, &c.

And.

And thus you have the Proof of the Point; That *Man's Pilgrimage on Earth is of short Continuance*: Give me leave but to draw forth some *practical Improvements* from it; and I shall pass to the Second.

Application.

First, Is it so, that *Man* (the most *Excellent* of *Creatures* here below) is of so short Continuance? then this may teach us not to set our Hearts too much on any *Earthly Comforts*; as *Children, Riches, &c.* 'Tis true, these things are pleasing and delightful to us for a Time; as *Jonah's Gourd* was a great Refreshment to him; but God prepared a *Worm*, which smote the *Gourd*, that it withered; so *Children*: the Parents take a great delight, and comfort in them for a time; but then God prepares a *Worm*, i. e. some *Sickness, or Disease*, which seises upon these *Gourds*, and makes them wither, and dy. *Jon. iv. 10.*

Many are troubled to know what that *Gourd* was of *Jonah's*; some *Expositours* render it by *קיקיון*, which is as much a *Hy*: the word in the *Hebrew* is *Kikaion*, i. e. a kind of a little *Shrub, or Tree*, which had broad Leaves (like a *Vine*) and a very thick Shadow: without Doubt, 'twas a Plant, which quickly grew up, and was very shadowy, and so refreshing, and comfortable.

The end, why God sent this pretty *Tree*, 'twas to cover the head of *Jonas*, that it might be a shadow to com-

Fort him in his *Grief*: thus God gives Children, to comfort them for a time, but he would not have us set our *Hearts* upon such brittle things, such *Shadows*, dore upon such *Plants*, not overlove them; if so, God can quickly send a *Worm*, which will blast their *Hopes*, which will dash in pieces all their *Comforts*; that, which they took most delight in, shall *perish* in a *Moment*: *Alas!* all outward *Blessings* are in themselves *fading*, and *perishing*: *The Fashion of this World passes away*; 1. Cor. vii. 31. *The Scheme, the Beauty of the best earthly things pass away*, whilst we *enjoy* them; they *moulder away* between our *Hands*, whilst we are *using* them.

We see here in this *Instance* we are met together upon, How quickly the *Beauty of all worldly Blessings* may be *blasted*: If God gives *Commission*, he can *blast* all our *Estates*; and *Comforts* in a day, nay in a *Moment*; all *Creatures* are *perishing Substances*, and *swept away* in a trice: *Worldly things, the best, and greatest of them, are but little, and for a little time, fine Flowers, but quickly cropt: Man, in his greatest Enjoyment, is in as perishing a Condition, as any thing he enjoys; We are always dying, and so is all, that we have; ours are dying Comforts, dying Riches, dying Honours, dying Strength, dying Beauty, dying Children.* If. xl. 6. *All flesh is grass, and the goodness thereof is, as the Flower of the field, that quickly withers, and decays. The best of earthly Excellencies may soon be taken away*
from.

from us: not only is *Man* of a brittle Constitution in Nature, but all the Perfections, which he ha's, on this side *Grace*, are brittle to: If the *Scriptures* were silent in this point, yet *Experience* would tell us, 'twas true.

Oh! Therefore *Christians* set not your Affections on things here below: set them not upon *Earthly Glories*, upon *Earthly Comforts*. 'Tis no wisdom to hold that fast in our Affections, which we cannot hold long in our Possessions; or to love those things much, which may speedily be lost. Oh! pursue *Spirituals*, and make sure of *Heavenly Comforts*! these onely are durable: of these you can never be strip'd of. The Soul, that is once thus clothed, shall never be found naked: the Comforts of the *Graces* of *Christ* in *Sanctification*, these inward Comforts, these are unfading flowers; an *Inheritance* incorruptible, that fadeth not away. All worldly Comforts may quickly be dash'd, and lost, prepare therefore for *Changes*, and use this world as not abusing it; i. e. use it well, prudently, and cheerfully; become submissive to the *All-ruling Providence* of *God*, when he takes away any of your outward Comforts, say, as *Job* did, Ch. i. 21. The Lord gave, and the Lord ha's taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord. 'Tis very observable there; The Lord ha's given me these Comforts not by my Strength, or my Diligence; by my Policy, or my Prudence, I have gotten such an Estate, or such Children; No, but The Lord ha's given; He is the Fountain.

Fountain, and Donor of all our earthly Comforts; They are Fruits of God's Bounty; and therefore that, which he gives freely, we should, when he calls for it, part with contentedly. If the Lord give us all we have, we think, this should make us willing to give back something unto the Lord again: If we were but thoroughly perswaded of all our Receipts from him; we should be more contented (when he commands) to give all again back to him. God may command these things from us by Authority; I, but he expects this from us as our Duty.

In all our Afflictions let us look beyond the Creature. In all our Losses we either feel, or fear, let our Hearts be carried up unto God, and say, *The Lord ha's given, &c. and the Lord ha's done this, and that.* It came not by Chance, or Fortune; but it is the Lord, and let him do what seemeth him good. Let us be dumb, and not open our mouths by any impatient Speeches, because thou Lord dost these things. God is worthy of all Blessing, and Praise, as well when he deprives us of Earthly blessings, as when he bestows them on us. And therefore in every thing give thanks; and I must tell you also, that, if we thus bless God in our Afflictions, our very Afflictions will prove Blessings to us.

Let us therefore, when God takes away such blessings from us; Bless God for it, and submit our Wills to his Will, and pray, that he would Sanctifie these things

ous, and then all things shall prove best for us. Set not your Hearts too much on any Earthly Comforts: I have been the longer upon this Use; Because 'tis so pertinent to the occasion.

Seeing our Days are of such short Continuance, let us be Admonished to live all our Days: some lose many out of a few, and live not one of their few days: we live no more of our time, then we spend well. An Heathen could say; *He liv'd no day without a line*; i. e. *He did something Remarkable every day*. What a shame is it then, that a Christian should live a day without a Line, do nothing in it worth the doing?

Secondly, Is a man's life so short, but an hundredth, as a thing of nothing, then they are in a great Errour, who place their chiefest Happiness in this life. 'Tis true, life is sweet, and Dear unto us: I, but there is a better life, which is Dearer, and Christ is dearest of all unto us; for when Saint Paul said, *He was not only ready to be bound, but also to dy at Hierusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus*; Acts xxi. 13. If to live on Earth were our best being; in vain were the Apostle's desire of Dissolution, if to dy, and to live with Christ were not best of all. Phil. i. 23.

Thirdly, Seeing this time of our life is short, and hastens out of our hands; Let us make hast to lay hold upon Eternal Life: all our days are but few, and every

every man living hath liv'd a few days already; possibly thy few days past are all, that thou shalt pass. Say not therefore, that thou wilt repent to Morrow; Boast not thyself of to morrow (says Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 1.) for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Possibly this Day may bring forth thy Death; and then how shall to morrow bring forth thy Repentance? We say of some men, that they do much in a little time, and truly how much soever any man ha's to doe, I am sure he ha's but a little time to do it in: and indeed these few days are all the working days, that ever we shall have. Let this be a Spur to Diligence, and to Duty. Let us now work out our own Salvation, &c. for the Night of Death will shortly come upon us, and then none of us can work any more. In *Heaven* there is nothing but Rest, and in *Hell*, though there be no Rest, yet there is no Labour: In *Hell* there is nothing but Wages; and in *Heaven* there is nothing but Reward. Our whole work lies in this short time we live. That's a third Inference.

Fourthly, Seeing this time of our *Life* is of so short Continuance: How vainly do men reckon upon many Years yet to come; when as their whole *Time*, past, present, and to come, can make but a few Days, an hand-breadth? See how the *Apostle* rebukes such; *Jam. iv. 13, 14. Vide locum.* So also the *Apostle Paul* pleads down a worldly Spirit with this Argument; *1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. Vide locum.* Now, methinks, this Consideration should
make

make us take up, or draw in our Affections about worldly things; because our time in this World is short.

Fifthly, This should make us patient in all our Afflictions: all our days are but few, and therefore our days of Sorrow cannot be many. Let us not reckon the Suffering of this present time to be Worthy, &c. A Little Time, and he, that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. For, Our light Affliction, which is but a Moment, works for us a far more exceeding, and Eternal Weight of glory, 1: Cor. iv. 14.

Lastly, Seeing Man's life is short; let this teach us not to trust in man. Cease from man, whose breath is in his Nostrils; place not the hope of your life in man's Protection, but in God's, in whom we live, move, and have our being. Be not solicitous for the shortness of thy life; but use it as an Inducement to live well, and to walk with God; to make thy Election sure, and certain, whilst it is called to day. The Benefit of life is not in the length of it, but in the pious use of it. He sometimes lives the least, that lives the longest: and he allwaies lives the longest, that lives the best. When therefore thou goest out of thy doors, say to thy self, Perhaps, I shall never Return home alive. When thou risest from thy Bed, Perhaps, I shall never sleep more. When thou lyest down to Rest, Perhaps, I shall never wake more: this will add wings to thy desires, to spend thy short time well. In a word, and so to shut up this

first point, from the first General; Let the certain Knowledge of thy life's uncertainty, and Brevity, persuade thee, like a wise Steward, to perfect thy accounts, and set thy House in order, for shortly thou must dy, and not live, Isa. xxxviii. 1. Behold, thou, hast made my days as an hand-breadth, mine, &c. Man's life here is of short Continuance. That's the first point, the Brevity of man's life.

Come we now to the second General part, and that Demonstrates Man's Vanity in the last words: *Verily, every man at his best Estate, &c.*

The Point Observable from hence is this; That Man, frail Man, in all his worldly Pomp, and Glory, is a meer Vanity. Job says, Chap. xi. 11. The Lord knows Vain man, or he knows the Vanity of man; he knows that man is naturally full of Vanity, very full of Vanity. It is an Hebraisme that, Noting, how full of Vanity man is, who is called a Man of Vanity, and how false he is, who is called a Man of Falshood; Generally man has,

1. Much Falshness of Spirit: 2. Much Rashness of Spirit; and he has also a double Rashness: 1. Rashness in not considering his End? Deut. xxxii. 29. Oh! that they were wise, that they would consider their latter End! Wisdom looks to what is coming upon us; Folly staves upon what is present with us.

2. Rashness, in not considering the way, or means, that

that lead unto a good *End*; many men see such an *End*; I, but he goes a way quite contrary: he sets up a Resolution for *Heaven*, that's his *End*, but he walks *Hell*-ward. This also is *Vanity*; and unless timely foreseen, and turn'd from, will prove the greatest Vexation of Spirit in the *End*.

Now you must know the *Scripture* uses this word *Vanity*, under a fourfold Notion, and in every one of them, *Man* is included.

First, *Emptiness* comes under the Notion of *Vanity*; *Psal. ii. 1. Why do the Heathen rage, and the People imagine a vain thing? i. e. An Empty thing, a thing, that shall take no Effect: so Vain Man is an Empty Man; he has nothing in him, but that, which is good for nothing; and therefore saith Saint James, Chap. ii. 20. Wilt thou know, Oh vain Man! that Faith without works is Dead? As if he had said, thou Empty Man, thou, that hast but a Boast of Faith, thou, whose Faith is fill'd up onely with good Words, not good Works, Wilt thou know (thou shalt whither thou wilt, or no) that thy Faith is Dead?*

When *Man* fell from *God*; the *Devil* emptied him of that, which he was full off, the Image of *God* in *Uprightness*; and fill'd him with that, which was but *Emptiness*, his own Image in *Unrighteousness*: Naturally he's a vain empty *Man*: The Heart of man, at the best of Nature, is but like a Child's Pocket full

of Stones, and Trassh, and how empty is that Heart, which is thus fill'd? *Vain Man* is an *Empty Man*; unless to be full of vain things (which are worse, then *Emptyness*.) may go for *Fullness*.

Again, Secondly, That is *Vain*, which is *Unprofitable*; and thus it is expounded, *Mal. iii. 14.* Ye have said, it is *vain* to serve God, and what Profit is it that we keep his Ordinances? And *Ecclesi. i. 2.* having pronounced all things to be *Vanity*, he subjoins, What Profit has a man for all the Labour, which he takes under the Sun? So man is *Vain* in this Sence; what greater *Vanity*, then to let go the Substance for a Shadow? Heaven for this World? What will it profit a man to gain the world, and to lose, &c. That's a Second Notion.

Thirdly, *Vain man*: i.e. Deceitful man, *Homines falsitatis*; so *Cajetane*: and *Psal. lxii. 9.* Surely men of low degree are *Vanity*, and men of high degree are a Lye. To be layd in the Balance, they are altogether lighter then *Vanity*. *Virgil* calls him *Vanum mendacemque hominem*; vain, and deceitful man: and *Psal. iv. 2.* How long will ye love *vanity*, and seek after leasing? *Vanity* seeks after *Vanity*: that's a third Notion.

Fourthly, and lastly, *Vain man*, i.e. *Transitory man*; man is *vanity*, because he is frail, and transitory; that is said to be *vain*, which vanishes: that man vanishes away; see a plain place of Scripture, *Psal. cxliiii. 4.* *Man is like to Vanity, his days are as a Shadow, which passes.*

passes away. Here is a Man's Picture drawn to the life, like to *Vanity*; a poor transitory thing, here now, and gon anon: He is not only *empty, unprofitable, and deceitful*, but very *frail, and transitory*.

Well now (as the *Wiseman* said, *Ecclesiast*, xi. 8.) Suppose you live many years, to fourscore, or an hundred (which is very improbable) 'tis an hundred to one, you do not: Yet suppose it; let me tell you, that so many years are a *shadow*, as a *Tale*, that is told. Verily, every Man, old, and young, rich and poor, is a *Vanity*; In the morning, they are like *Grass*, flourish a little, making a little shew for a time; but in the Evening they are *Cut down*, and *Withered* away.

But yet further; suppose a man live many daies, to the Utmost Extent of *Nature*, and rejoyce in all those his days (which is in a manner impossible, yet I say suppose it) that his Head never ached all his Days; He knew not what Sorrow, or Sicknefs meant; he has what his Heart can desire; yet I must tell him, that all is but *Vanity*; when all is done: *What Profit has a Man of all his Labours, which he takes under the Sun?* The total Sum amounts to this; *Man is at his best Estate altogether Vanity*.

Now (you must know) that there is a threefold *Vanity*;

First, Of Creation.

D 3.

Secondly,

Secondly, Of Transgression.

Thirdly, Of Condition.

Man is Vanity in all these three Respects.

First, In the Excellency of his Creation, he seems not to be void of Vanity: for as his Age is nothing before the Lord: why to man himself in his Innocency, compared with God his Creator, is nothing but Vanity; Job iv. 18. Behold, he put no Trust in his Servants, and his Angels he charged with Folly. And if Cherubins, and Seraphims do cover their Faces, as being imperfect, and vain, compared with him, how much more may Vanity be attributed to us, who dwell in Houses of Clay: whose Foundation is in the Dust, which are crush'd before the Month? Job. iv. 13.

But then again, Secondly, If man be Vanity in his Creation, compared with God, then he has brought upon him a second, and worse kind of vanity by his Fall. A vanity of Transgression and Guilt; by this, Man (who was Heir apparent of the World) was exil'd Paradise, his Glory becomes cloathed with Ignominie, and Shame. And this brings a third vanity after it; a vanity of Condition, from which none can be exempted; every man living is vanity, whether Sinner, or Saint, as long as he retains the Appellation of a man, so long he is Inheritour of vanity, whose frame is as brittle as Glass, whose Name is as soon forgot, as a Tale, that is told: Let the Heathen know (says David) Psa. ix. 20.

that they are but men. But Men! Why? is that so slight a matter? what is Man? Jeremiah tells us, Ch. xxii. 29. *Earth, Earth, Earth, Every man, that lives upon the Earth, is but a piece of that Earth, on which he lives: Earth by Creation, Earth by Conversation, and Earth by Dissolution into Dust. Man never continues in one Stay, but vanishes as a Shadow.* Job xiv. 2.

In a word, that so I may pass to a short Application; As Holiness to the Lord was engraven upon Aaron's Breast-Plate, Exod. xxviii. 36. so upon every man's Forehead may be written this Motto; *Man at his best Estate is altogether vanity.*

Give me leave to derive from this two Observations, these few *Practical Improvements*, and I have done.

And First, Is it so, that every man at his best, &c. Then this may instruct us not to trust in man. Psal. cxlv. 3, 4. *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the Son of man, in whom there is no help; his breath goes forth, he returns to the Earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.* Trust not therefore in the greatest man, &c. my will deceive you, and every man is vanity.

Every man, saies the Psalmist, walks in a vain shew: there is a shew of this, and that, and the other thing, a promise of it, but it is a vain Shew; 'tis but like a Pageant, which feeds the Eye, or delights the Fancy, or pleases the Ear, but it passes away, and leaves you as Empty as before. *Every man at his best Estate is alto-*

gether

gether vanity; not only in his Afflictions, and in his Losses, in his Troubles, and in his Sorrows, but take a man in the Height, and Perfection, and accomplishment of all Creature Comforts, take the Creme, the Pith, the Marrow, the Sweetness of all, extract a Quintessence of all, that can be had in the Creatures, and all's but vanity. If therefore the Creature be so vain, and the Dayes of man be Vanity? Oh! let us set our Eys, and Hearts upon that, which is *Something*; upon that, which is *All*, upon that, which is *Lasting*; upon that, which is *Everlasting*; upon that, which is *Truth* it self; and will not, nay cannot deceive us; upon that, which will be more in *Fruition*, then ever it was in *Expectation*. Oh! let us not trust in lying vanities; but in the Ever-living, and Never-failing God. Man will be trusting in some-what, and he is so forward to trust in vanity (which indeed is nothing) that it is the hardest thing in the World to take him off. We cannot press our selves, or others too much to trust in God; and, we cannot Repress them enough from trusting vanity. We say, "Such a man has deceived me once, but" he shall not deceive me a second time. Why should we be so willing to be deceived a Thousand times with vanities: God never deceived, or failed any man that ever trusted in him; *Psal. ix. 10.* Oh! therefore let this perswade our Hearts to trust in God; we cannot trust him too much, or the Creature too little. If

we make the Creature our Staff, it will be our Scourge; if we lean upon it as our Rock, it will run into our Hands as a broken Reed: The best way to keep up our Comforts in the Creature, is to keep our Distance from the Creature: and let me tell you this; That they shall always finde most Comfort from the World, who live furthest off it, and expect least from it: God is good, and the more we trust in him, the better he will be to us; nay, he will not be good to us at all, unless we trust him; Trust not therefore in man, that is inconstant, changeable, mortal, vain: Rely not on him, he's a broken Reed; but trust in God, for he is the help of our Countenance, and our God. It is better to trust in the Lord, then to put any Confidence in man. Yea, 'tis better to trust in the Lord, then to put any Confidence in Princes. Psal. cxviii. 8, 9. But blessed is the man that makes the Lord his Trust; and they that know thy Name, will put their Trust in thee, for thou Lord never failest them that seek thee. That's the first Use, Trust not in man, which is but Vanity.

Again, Secondly, Since Every man at his best Estate is, &c. Then this may check our Pride, and pull down our proud Spirits: what worth or Excellency is in any man to cause him to be blown up as a Bladder? why is Earth and Ashes proud? See-

ing that when a man dyes he's but Heir of *Worms*, a Companion of crawling *Worms*. The Unicorn may boast of his *Horn*, which medicineth the poysoned Streams, the Bezoar of his precious Stone, the Beyer of his Skin, the Panther of his Colours, the Pink of its Sweetness, the Tulip of its Beauty, and many other Creatures of some singular Excellency; but man, vain man! mushroom man! has nothing of his own to animate Pride, but rather should be exceedingly humbled for his manifold Wants, and exceeding Vanities. If a Beggar may be proud of his Rags, or a Lazar of his Soars, then have we cause to be proud; not else: That's a Second.

Thirdly, Seeing Man at his best Estate, &c. why then this convinces, and sharply reproves the Folly, and madness of *Worldlings*, who trifle away their precious time in loathsome Vanities; like Swine, that root up Beds of Flowers, and sweet Roses, but wallow in the Mire: Oh! ye Sons of Men, how long will ye love Vanity? Psal. iv. 2. Why will ye after vanity? and draw Iniquity with Cords of vanity? Isa. v. 18. Why do ye take pleasure in the vanity of Wickedness, thinking it vain, not to be vain in your Conversations? Oh! how sweet soever it seems to you for the present, I must tell you, 'twill prove very distrustful in the End: Oh! drink no longer of the pleasant Rivers
of

of *Damascus*, but on the wholesom streams of *Jordan*? Do not affect vain Company, or vain, and idle persons, who have not the fear of God before their Eys; who flatter with their lips, and do speak with a double Heart, *Psal. xii. 2. Whose mouth speaketh Vanity, and their Right-hand is a Right-hand of falshood;* *Psal. cxliv. 8.* Oh! do not squander away your pretious hours in *Vanities*, but know, that whosoever travels with *Vanity* shall bring forth iniquitie, which late Repentance must either drown, or damnation Nurse.

And lastly, seeing that every man, &c. Why then learn from hence to condemn thy vain life, with all its *Vanities*, and to seek for a new, and better life, where *Vanity* is not admitted. Oh! let us thirst after *Heaven*, after *Christ*; let our life be hid with *Christ* in *God*, that so when *Christ* shall appear, we may also, &c. Whilst we live let's live by the Faith of the Son of *God*, that so when we dy we may dy in the Faith, and favour of *Christ*; let our Conversation be in *Heaven*: whilst we are here upon *Earth*, let's Meditate continually on *Christ*, and his Merits, our *Redemption*, and the Glorious inheritance he has Purchased for us, and let us say, Thou, O *Lord Jesus*, art our *Hope*, and our *Stay*; seeing thou hast given us the *World*, which we Con-

tain, give us thy *self* whom our Souls desire, let
 others strive for *Temporal Kingdoms*, but let us
 strive for *Eternal*; let others heap up *Riches*, but
 let our hearts Hunger, and Thirst after *Righteousness*;
 let others Gape after the *vanities* of this World,
 but let us pant, and breath, and gape after *Christ*,
 desire to be desolved, that we may be ever with the
Lord, whilst we live here on Earth, let us Pray also
 that the life of *Jesus* may be made manifest in our
 Mortal Flesh; and then come *Lord Jesus*, come
 quickly. Though our lives here be but as a *span-long*,
 and attended with as many Miseries, as there be
 Stars in the firmament, and *vanities*, as sand by the
 Sea-shore; Yet after this life is ended, we shall
 have a building not made with hands but
Eternall in the Heavens, though we now for a time
 hang up our Harpes by the Rivers of *Babylon*,
 and weep for the Floods of *Vanity*, that are rea-
 dy to over-whelm us in our Captivity; Yet after
 a while we shall be brought home with Triumph
 unto a Land Flowing with *Milk*, and *Honey*, to life
 without *Death*, to Days without end, to such Mu-
 sick as we never heard before, by a Quire of An-
 gels, to a World without *Vanity*; to a Condition
 without alteration, and to *Eternal Glory*, which
 Ey ha's not seen, nor Ear heard, &c. Which he
 will

will give us that has purchaſt for us by his own moſt precious Blood, to whom with the Father, &c.

So much for the *Text*, I come now to the *Ocaſion*.
Sory I am to be an Actor in this mournfull Scene.

For truly here I can ſcarce ſpeak for grief, or give you a *Funeral Eulogy* of this Deceaſed Lady, whoſe lively Duſt lies here before us, unleſs inſtead of ſtrewing of Flowers I bedew her Hearſe with Tears, and pour out my matter in a Sorrowfull, and Dolefull Complaint of our loſs;

Certe loques loquuntur: Ingentes Stupent.

I could willingly (I confeſs) now give ſcope to mine, and your Paſſion, that we might ſit down a while in ſilence, and onely by the *Language* of our Tears ſpeak the ſence of our Loſs. But then (I conceive) I ſhould be Injurious to this Solemn, and Sorrowfull *Assembly*, to God's Honour, our Friend's *Memory*, and others *Proſit*: ſince by paying the *Tribute* of Praise to God's dear Servants, we advance God's *Glory*; and Perpetuate their *Remembrance*, and add Spurs to the Pious endeavours of thoſe, who ſurvive.

I could ſpeak much (having known her from a *Childe*) to the *Glory* of God's Rich Grace, in the Embalming her Name with a precious *Memory*, but I ſhall not need to Expatiate my ſelf in her juſt,

and Due Character. But some things, that were very Remarkable in her, towards her latter End, I must not Omit. Give me leave therefore for your Imitation, to break this *Alabaſter* Box of precious Oynment, and to pour it forth upon you, that the Saviour thereof may fill the whole house of God with a Sweet Perfume, and that such an Example, and Precedent of Piety, may incite, and Encourage you to remember your Creatour in the Daies of your youth, before the Evil Day of your Death comes. Indeed I know the Applause, and Welcom, that the Saints, and Angels have given her in Heaven; and the Blessed Euge: that the Author, and Finisher of our Faith has now Recieved her into these.

These are the true, and full Commendations, that her Soul now rests in. Onely (this we must know) that as the Death of this Illustrious, and Vertuous Person is, in God's Eyes; so in ours also, it ought to be Honourable, and Pretious.

And, because Saint Bernard's Speech is most true, *Pretiosa Mors Sanctorum, quam commendat vita pretiosa*; A pious Life makes a pretious Death. I might trace this young Lady through her whole Life, and observe many remarkable Passages in it, by which, as by so many Steps, and Paces, she walked on daily to the Attainment of this right Christian, and Comfortable Death.

First,

First, For her Birth, and Parentage; 'twas of good Note and Esteem; being born at Stoke in Lincolnshire, and descended from an Antient Family, having Grave, Ingenuous, and Religious Parents; Honourable, Noble, and Generous Persons to her Relations; and though (I confess) the Dignity of Birth, if alone, and unattended with moral Accomplishments, be but a cold, and slender Commendation;

Et genus, & proavos, & quæ non fecimus ipsi,

Vix, &c.

Yet this, when it stands in Conjunction with Virtue, it sets a Price, and Lustre upon it, 'tis Splendor Virtutis; it casts a Varnish upon Virtue it self, and makes it more Conspicuous.

But Secondly, If you surveigh Her in the Moral, and Practick Part of Her Life, you'd finde many things in it very observable; Take Her in Her familiar Conversation, and so she was a Loving, Faithfull, and Constant Friend; thankfull for any Kindness, and studious to requite it; She was wont to extenuate, not to aggravate any Injury, or Unkindness offered Her, she would not *Scintillam in Flammam, nec festucam in Trabem enatare*; as Saint Augustine speaks of Some Contentious Persons: In a word, in all her Deportment (as ever I perceived) she was Regular, and just; Affable, and Virtuour to all.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Take *Her*, as to *Her Relations*, and so she was an obedient Child to her Parents; a loving Sister to her Brethren; and an indulgent, and kind Wife to her Husband: and though it pleased Almighty God to divorce them by Death almost as soon as they were married; yet she shewed her Affection to the last, for when I asked *Her*, what she would leave her Husband as a Memorial of her true Love, (amongst those small Legacies, she had Power to dispose off,) she replied; "She would leave him her *Heart*," "Prayers, that God would bless him, and direct him in all his Ways; And I hope he will live to reap the Benefit of her Prayers: The best Legacy certainly, that a good Wife can leave her Husband."

These, I know (you will all grant) were lovely Virtues in the Sphere of Morality; but yet there were two Graces more remarkable in *Her*, of an higher Pitch, more Divine, and Spiritual, more immediate Fruits of her Christian Religion: viz. her Charity, and her Piety; her Compassion to the Poor; and her Devotion to her God.

First, for her Charity to the Poor: She was not only a Friend, but a Mother; Her Bowels of Compassion were enlarged toward them, not only in her Life, but at her Death: for, to my Knowledge, she has left to two Parishes in Lincolnshire five pounds a piece.

piece to be distributed to the Poor: and five pounds to the Poor of this Parish, wherein she is to be interred, and to the Ministers in these three Places, twenty Shillings a piece, as a Token of her Affection for them. The Age we live in, though it has the Lamp of Profession, yet (God knows) little of this Oyl of Charity: Many though they have flourishing Estates, yet they have withered Hands, and cannot stretch them out to good Uses: this Lady had but a small matter left in her Hands to dispose of, and she left it freely to those, that had most need: She had indeed a free, and noble Soul to all; but most generous, and bountiful to the Poor: what should I say of Her? She sowed plentifully, and she has reaped plentifully, as Saint Basil speaks: she was merciful, and no Question, but she has obtained Mercy.

Secondly, for her Piety: Though it was diffused in a constant Tenour through the whole Course of her Life; yet it appeared most glorious near her Death, then she bitterly bewail'd the precious time she had spent in worldly Vanities, in unnecessary, and complemental Visits; and she said, "If God should lengthen out her Days, the World should see such an Alteration, and Change in her: how she would endeavour to redeem that time she had so mispent by a double Diligence in the Practice of Holiness." When I press'd her to finish that great work of Repentance, and Sorrow for Sin, before

she finished her Course? telling her that 'twas Sin, that
 made Death bitter; and until that Sting be taken out
 by true Repentance, and Faith in Christ's Merits, we can-
 not finish our Course with Joy. Lord! 'twas admirable to
 me to see how low she sunk her Spirits, humbling her
 Soul to the Dust by an hearty Confession; loathing the
 very thoughts of her former Transgressions; abhorring
 her self for all her Sins; and saying, with that blessed
 Martyr, in the Point of Justification, None but Christ,
 none but Christ; throwing her self into his Arms by a
 lively Faith acknowledging no Name under Heaven, by
 which she expected Salvation, but onely in, and through
 Jesus Christ our Lord Sublimis Patria, sed humilia via; Hea-
 ven is high, but the Passage to it is low: we must stoop
 before our Death, by an humble Confession of our own
 Unworthiness, and the Worthiness of Christ, or we shall
 never come thither. Non estimator meritis, sed venis lar-
 gitor, when all is done will prove the best Divinity, and
 truest for dying Persons; and (I'll assure you) our deceased
 Sister had learn'd this Lesson very well; for I never saw,
 (as I can rightly judge) a Soul more truly penitent, and
 humble, then hers was. The time she lay upon her sick
 Bed was not very long, but very sharp, and (as I am in-
 formed) in the time of her Sicknes, so patient, so con-
 tented, so willing to be at God's Dispose, either for Life, or
 Death, so full of sweet, holy, and heavenly Instructions,
 Exhortations, Counsels to her Relations, Friends, and

The Life of Mary Magdalene

49

Servants, lifting up her Soul; Night, and Day in Prayers, and devout Ejaculations, for Mercy upon her own Soul, and for all, that were about her.

Not long before she dyed, she sent for me, and after I had prayed by her, she intreated me to administer the holy Sacrament to her, which I could not deny; and if you had seen, but with what Devotion she hungered, and thirsted after this her last Pledge, with what Fervency of Spirit she received it; you would never forget her: 'twas the last Manna she fed upon on this side Jordan, now she is in the Land of Delights, receiving the Sacrament, sed adipe fructum; *significans*. Now she is at the Well-Head, and Fountain of all Joy, and Bliss.

Thus she both liv'd, and dyed like a Lamb, lowly meekly, and dyed quietly. Let neither her affectionate Husband, or loving Alliances, nor her Grave inordinately, she dyed young indeed, but yet not before her time, (her Days were but as an handbreadth) because not before she was ready for Death. She was cut down by the sickle of Death, I confess betimes, in her best Estate, I but yet she was not cut down before she was ripe for the Harvest. Youth, and flourishing Days (you see) cannot privilege any from the Grave, the Beauty of Rachel will not keep her from the Dust: neither is it Parentage, or Wealth, can put Death out of Commission: Riches avail not in the day of Death; no, nor Holiness, nor Piety can deliver any from the

Great. It profits indeed from small Drops, but
not a Temporal for eternal Joy.

We see this by daily Experiences: I need not ex-
pose my self on this Theme, Our Dear Friend and Sister is
now at Rest.

And in that blessed Rest we shall now leave her, re-
solving our selves, that she dyed in the Favour of God
in the Faith of Christ. In the Place of a good Con-
science, how would it be received if you would?

Nothing now remains, but that we render all
humble thanks to Almighty God, for this so blef-

ful Departure of his Faithfull Servant. Beseech-
ing him to grant, that when the Hour of our Vi-

sitation comes upon us, we may be found of him
in his Grace, appear before him with Comfort, and

at last be received with Joy into those Heavenly
Mansions, which our Blessed Saviour has purcha-

sed for us. Amen, So be it.

in her self Esteem, I but yet she was not without a
the was true for the Church, Jew, and Gentile.

Day (you see) cannot privilege any from the Great
the Beauty of Rachel will not keep her from the Dust.

neither is it a Privilege of Wealth, nor of Dignity
of Commission: Riches avail not in the day of Wrath.

nor Honour, nor Riches can deliver any from the
Great.